

BENJAMIN HOLMES FARM
1458 Dogwood Road, 1 mile northwest of
Georgia Highway 124
Snellville Vicinity
Gwinnett County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2236

HABS
GA,
68-SNEVI.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGION
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BENJAMIN HOLMES FARM

HABS No. GA-2236 /-

HABS

GA,

68-SNEVI.V,

Location: 1458 Dogwood Road
Snellville Vicinity (1.0 miles northwest of Georgia Hwy. 124)
Gwinnett County
Georgia

U.S.G.S. Luxomni Quadrangle (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
16.775190.3752460

Present Owner: Gwinnett County, Georgia
Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners
75 Langley Drive
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30245

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: None

Statement of Significance: Though now substantially deteriorated, the Benjamin Holmes Farm provides important information concerning Reconstruction-era farming practices in Gwinnett County as well as insight into construction techniques utilized at that time.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The house was built c.1865-1870 by Benjamin Homes.
2. Architect: It is not believed that this house was designed by an architect.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The property was first acquired in 1823 by Robert Lassiter, who is not believed to have ever lived at the site, and was sold by Lassiter to Arthur Green Holmes sometime between 1831 and 1850. A. G. Holmes' son, Benjamin Holmes, was deeded the property by his father in 1864. Benjamin Holmes proved to be the property's longest-term owner, living on and farming the property until at least 1893. (Holmes died in 1895, but it is not known where he was living at that time.) In 1893 year the property was purchased from Holmes by W. J. Zachary, who at an unknown later date conveyed the title to Atlanta Trust and Banking. J. B. Nash acquired the property in 1902 and sold it to Mrs. G. W. Simmons in 1915. Mrs. Eula D. Nash purchased the property in 1927, though she never resided here and rented the property to tenant farmers. Eula Nash deeded the property to her son-in-law, C. G. Haynes, in 1941. Raymond Williams purchased the property from Haynes in 1964 and was the last private owner of the Benjamin Holmes Farm.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: No information has been located concerning builder, contractor or suppliers.
5. Original plans and construction: As originally constructed, the floorplan of the Benjamin Holmes House consisted of two equal-sized front rooms with an entry into each; two shed rooms at the rear separated by a central porch (thus, this was an integral porch); a single shed room at the front left; and a shed porch along the remaining width of the front facade. The house was constructed with pine throughout and covered with a weatherboard exterior. Interior wall and ceiling surfaces are vertical pine boards approximately 10 inches to 12 inches in width. Flooring is six inch-wide pine boards. The house has a side-gable roof of fairly steep pitch.
6. Alterations and additions: A large addition was made c.1890 to the rear of the house, consisting of a kitchen with dimensions of approximately 18' - 7" x 16' - 0" and an entry room and small storage

room on the southeast side of the kitchen. The kitchen addition originally had a rubble fieldstone chimney centered on the rear (northeast) gable of the addition. This addition resulted in the enclosure of the original central back porch. A rolled asbestos brick veneer was applied to the house at some point during the past several decades.

B. Historical Context:

The Benjamin Holmes Farm is an interesting example of a Civil War-era farmhouse and agricultural complex believed to be typical of the immediate post-Civil War period in the vicinity of Gwinnett County. Research constraints prevent the development of a complete picture of the agricultural and domestic activities that occurred on this property, and yet what is available in terms of archival material is sufficient reach a basic understanding of this property and its historic functions.

The first owner of this property was Robert Lassiter, a resident of Columbia County, Georgia, who acquired it in December of 1823. There is no evidence to suggest that Lassiter ever resided on the property, however, and he may have sold it shortly after the purchase. If Lassiter did in fact dispose of this property during the 1820s, then there is at least one owner in the chain of title who remains unknown.

Arthur Green Holmes, a native of Virginia who arrived in Georgia in 1831, acquired this property sometime before 1850. The year of Holmes' purchase of the property, let alone the exact date, remains an uncertainty. The earliest record of land ownership in Gwinnett County by A. G. Holmes is the 1850 Census of Agriculture. Holmes is shown as owning a total of 250 acres, 150 of which were classified as improved, and the farm was given a cash value of \$500. Holmes' farming operation was fairly substantial and well-established in 1850 and exhibited a fair degree of diversity. He owned eight horses, eight milk cows, seven cattle, four oxen, 16 sheep and 45 swine. Crops raised on the farm included corn (750 bushels), oats (400 bushels), sweet potatoes (200 bushels), and wheat (13 bushels). Holmes also produced 100 pounds of butter, 100 pounds of bee's wax and honey and 30 pounds of wool.

By 1860, A. G. Holmes had added to his property, recording a total of 1,000 acres in the 1860 Census of Agriculture; 250 acres of Holmes' land was listed as improved and the cash value of his farm was indicated to be \$7,000. Holmes owned virtually the same numbers of livestock as in 1850, with the only significant increase being in the number of swine (66 in 1860 as opposed to 45 in 1850). The most significant change in agricultural output was the production of wheat; from only 13 pounds produced in 1850, Holmes harvested 230

pounds in 1860. A slight increase in the production of corn was noted, but Holmes harvested no oats in 1860 and only 30 pounds of sweet potatoes.

The 1860 Census of Population provides some additional and even slightly different information. A. G. Holmes, 60 years of age according to the census, is indicated as owning real estate worth \$8,000 and having a personal estate of \$7,277. He also owned seven slaves in 1860. Holmes' wife Caroline was 51 years of age in 1860, while their three children, Benjamin, Virginia and Almanora, were 21, 16 and seven.

Gwinnett County tax records for 1860 indicate that a property was being held in trust that year for Benjamin Holmes, Arthur Green Holmes' eldest son. The property was a portion of the A. G. Holmes estate and that upon which the subject farmhouse and outbuildings now stand. Benjamin Holmes married Elizabeth Rawlins sometime prior to 1862 and joined Georgia's 16th regiment in May of 1862. A portion of A. G. Holmes' property was deeded to Benjamin Holmes in May of 1864, while the younger Holmes remained a prisoner after having been captured at Cedar Creek, Virginia on 19 October 1864. Holmes was released on 30 March 1865 and returned to Georgia. It is believed that he constructed the subject house shortly thereafter.

The 1870 Census of Agriculture indicates that Benjamin Holmes owned 250 acres in Gwinnett County that year, 150 acres of which were classified as improved. The entire farm had a cash value of \$650 and Holmes' agricultural operation was diverse but somewhat smaller than his father's had been in 1850. He owned less than half the livestock his father had owned twenty years earlier and recorded significantly smaller crop harvests. Benjamin Holmes did produce a cotton crop in 1870, however, a total of 450 pounds or slightly more than one bale.

By 1880, Benjamin Holmes had added 199 acres to his farm, giving him a total of 349 acres, of which 149 were classified as improved. He apparently hired two full-time black farm laborers, for he is listed in the 1880 Census as paying 104 weeks of "hired labor for farm work - colored." The level of production of Holmes' farm had increased significantly by 1880, particularly in the amounts of corn (500 bushels) and cotton (9 bales) produced. Holmes had also diversified somewhat, with the Census indicating the presence of 500 peach trees and 62 apple trees. Livestock totals were very similar to those of 1870. Benjamin Holmes continued to farm this property until 1893, two years before his death. It is likely that it was Holmes who had the gabled addition built on to the rear of the house, since its construction suggests that it dates from the late 19th century.

After Benjamin Holmes mortgaged his property in 1893 and until the present day the farm has had a series of owners, few of which are believed to have actually lived on the property. It is known that Eula D. Nash rented the Benjamin Holmes Farm to cotton farmers during her period of ownership (1927-1941). The property was also rented to farmers by C. G. Haynes (owner 1941-1964) and by Raymond Williams, the last owner prior to acquisition of the property by Gwinnett County.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement (Main House):

1. Architectural Character: The residence of the Benjamin Holmes Farm is a one and one-half story side-gable farm house that might best be considered a variation on the double pen house type. A typical double pen exhibits square or nearly square rooms, a side-gable roof with exterior end chimneys and an exterior door providing access to each of the rooms. The Benjamin Holmes House is unusual on several accounts, however, and has been the subject of an addition and a few minor modifications. The most distinguishing features of the structure are the original paired shed rooms at the rear, which are separated by a small integral porch, and the small "Parson's room" at the front left corner of the house. The present dilapidated condition of the house and outbuildings is of course somewhat of a constraint to the full documentation and analysis of this grouping of historic resources.

2. Condition of fabric: The main house and smokehouse are both in dilapidated condition. A chickenhouse and a privy located to the rear of the main house have both collapsed within the past several years; while little remains of these structures, their original locations and certain of their materials may still be determined. Several other structures known to have been part of the agricultural complex are no longer extant.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The original portion of the main house measures 33' - 7" by 34' - 5", including the front porch. With the gabled addition to the rear, the overall building depth measures 52' - 11 & 1/2".
2. Foundations: Stone piers and log piers.
3. Walls: Weatherboard covered with a rolled asbestos brick veneer.
4. Structural system: Frame. Floor sills measure eight inches by ten inches. Ground floor level floor joists measure two inches by eight

inches while second floor level joists measure two inches by six inches. Roof rafters measure two inches by five inches.

5. Porches: Shed front porch extending the full width of the front facade with the exception of the small "Parson's room" at the left.

6. Chimneys: Only one chimney is still standing, on the left (northwest-facing) facade. This chimney is stone, as was the original chimney on the right (southeast-facing) facade. A third stone chimney once stood on the gable end (northeast-facing facade) of the rear addition.

7. Openings:

a. Doors: Original doors feature recessed panels on both door faces with unmolded panel surrounds.

b. Windows: All windows are substantially or completely deteriorated. There were originally six-over-six-light double hung sash.

8. Roof:

a. Roof shape, covering: Side gable roof with dropped shed rear extension (including integral porch) and dropped shed front porch. Standing seam metal covers the original wood shingles, which appear to have been left on the roof when the new covering was added.

b. Cornice, eaves: Overhanging boxed eaves.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Double pen plan with small "Parson's room" underneath a portion of the shed front porch roof. Also two rear shed rooms separated by a small integral porch were included in the original plan. A gabled addition was made c.1890 and extends back from the rear facade of the house.

2. Stairway: A single straight stair run rises to the upper level from what was originally the rear porch. A crawl space is situated beneath this stair run.

3. Flooring: Approximately six inch by one inch pine boards.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Approximately eleven inch by one inch pine boards.

5. Decorative features and trim: Decoration is confined to a few interior features, primarily the two mantels and the window surrounds.

6. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: No such equipment is present in the house.

b. Lighting: All light fixtures have been removed.

c. Plumbing: A single small bathroom, with tub, commode and sink, still remains in what was originally the right rear shed room.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Benjamin Holmes House is located approximately 75' northeast of Dogwood Road. The site was completely overgrown at the time of recording and includes several large hardwood trees. The smokehouse and few remains of the chicken coop and privy are all within 100' of the back of the house.

2. Outbuildings: The only standing outbuilding at the Benjamin Holmes Farm is a small frame structure measuring 14' x 12' 2", assumed to have functioned as smokehouse due to the presence of ventilation provided by open slats at the front and rear gables. This building has been floored, suggesting that it was put to another use when it ceased functioning as a smokehouse. It has a weatherboard exterior and is supported by stone piers. As with the main house, this outbuilding originally exhibited a wood shingle roof, which was eventually covered with metal. The smokehouse is in severely dilapidated condition.

A chicken coop and privy originally stood just to the north of the smokehouse but have been demolished. Although very little remains of these structures, their original location and certain of their materials may still be determined. Both were apparently frame buildings sided with weatherboard.

Several other structures that were once part of this agricultural complex are now completely gone. These included a barn, a corral and two or three corn cribs, all apparently located to the east and southeast of the main house. It is not known when these structures were built, who built them, or when they were demolished.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

None located.

B. Early Views:

None located

C. Interviews:

Interview with Raymond Williams, last private owner of the property. June, 1991.

Interview with Marvin Nash Worthy, Gwinnett County Historian. July, 1991.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Census of Agriculture, Georgia, 1850.

Census of Agriculture, Georgia, 1860.

Census of Agriculture, Georgia, 1870.

Gwinnett County Deed Records, Gwinnett County Courthouse,
Lawrenceville, Georgia, 30245.

Gwinnett County, Georgia 1860 Census. Published by the
Gwinnett County Historical Society, Lawrenceville, 1983.

Gwinnett County, Georgia 1870 Census. Published by the
Gwinnett County Historical Society, Lawrenceville, 1986.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Flanigan, James C. A History of Gwinnett County, 1818-1943.
Hapeville, Georgia: Tyler and Company, 1943.

G. Prepared by:

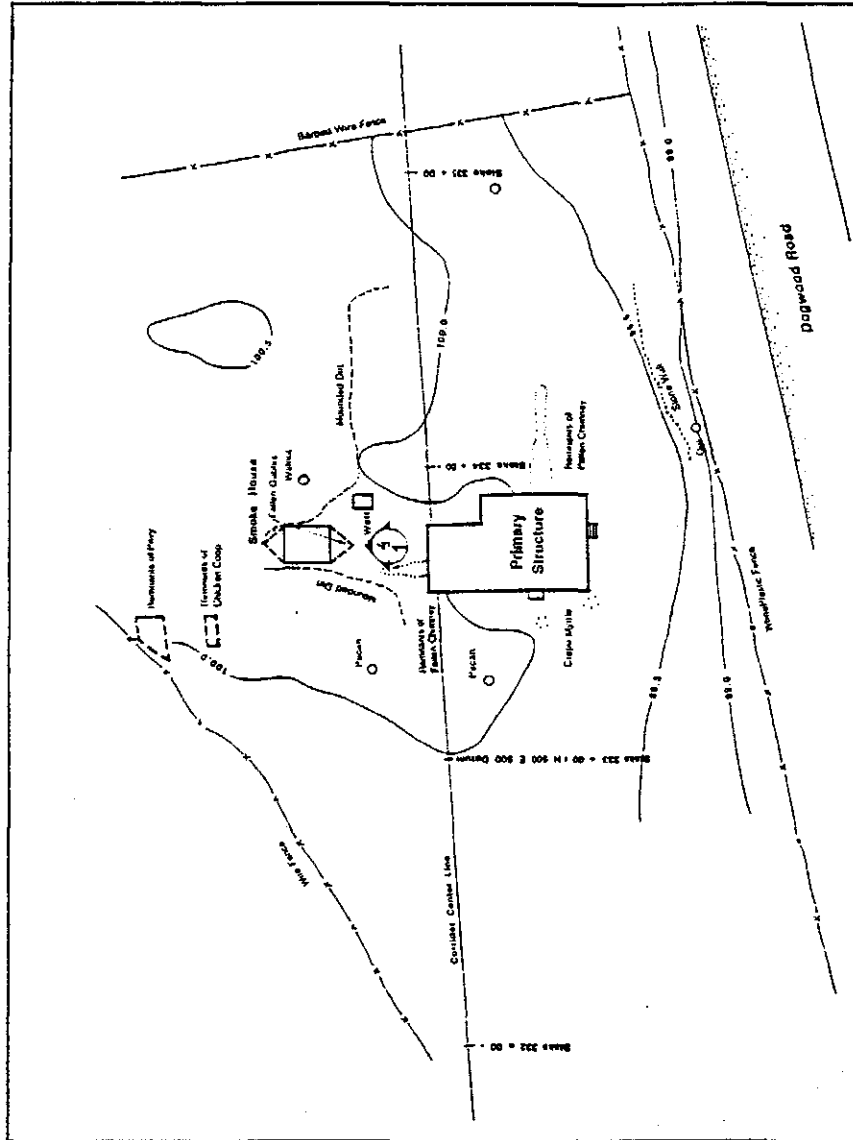
John A. Kissane
Preservation Planner
Jaeger/Pyburn, Inc.
119 Washington Street
Gainesville, GA 30501
Summer 1991

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the historic resources within the Ronald Reagan Parkway Project was undertaken by Ebasco Services, Incorporated. Law Environmental was contracted by Ebasco Services to conduct the necessary archeological investigations. Jaeger/Pyburn, Incorporated was contracted by Law Environmental to conduct the

necessary archival research and prepare the architectural documentation of the Benjamin Holmes Farm. The impending destruction of this site by the Federally-funded expressway project necessitated documentation of the properties determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. This documentation was undertaken as a mitigative effort required by a Memorandum of Agreement, accepted by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on 9 July 1991, between the Savannah District of the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office. Archival research and recording of the architectural resources at the Benjamin Holmes Farm was carried out by John A. Kissane, Project Historian, David Jaeger, Project Photographer, Alina Anapreychik, Project Architect, and W. A. Andrews, Project Architect all for Jaeger/Pyburn, Incorporated.

The Benjamin Holmes Farm



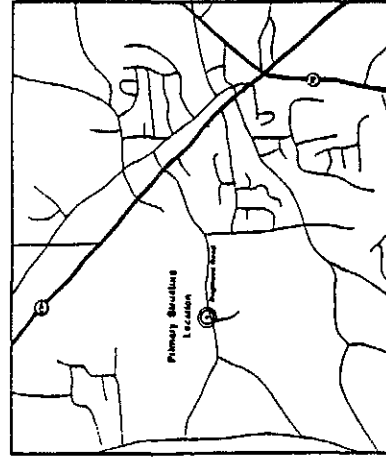
Site Plan
Scale: 1" = 20'

Drawn by: [illegible]

RECORDING WAS CONDUCTED DURING THE SUMMER AND FALL OF 1971 BY WILLIAM S. WEBER, PROGRAM MANAGER FOR ERASCO, INC. THE PROJECT WAS A JOINT EFFORT WITH THE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM. THE PROJECT DATA RECOVERY, RITA F. ELLIOTT, FIELD DIRECTOR FOR DALLAS, TEXAS, AND THE PROJECT HISTORIAN, DAVID J. JAGER, PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHER, ALMA ANAPREYCHICK, PROJECT ARCHITECT, AND W. A. ANDREWS, PROJECT ARCHITECT.

THE BENJAMIN HOLMES FARM CONSISTS OF A DETERIORATED RECORDS BUILDING, A HOUSE, AND A BARN. THE HOUSE IS A TWO-STOREY BRICK BUILDING. THE BARN IS A TWO-STOREY BRICK BUILDING. THE RECORDS BUILDING IS A ONE-STOREY BRICK BUILDING. THE PROPERTY PROVIDES IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING RECONSTRUCTION PRACTICES IN GWINNETT COUNTY AND INSIGHT INTO CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES UTILIZED AT THAT TIME.

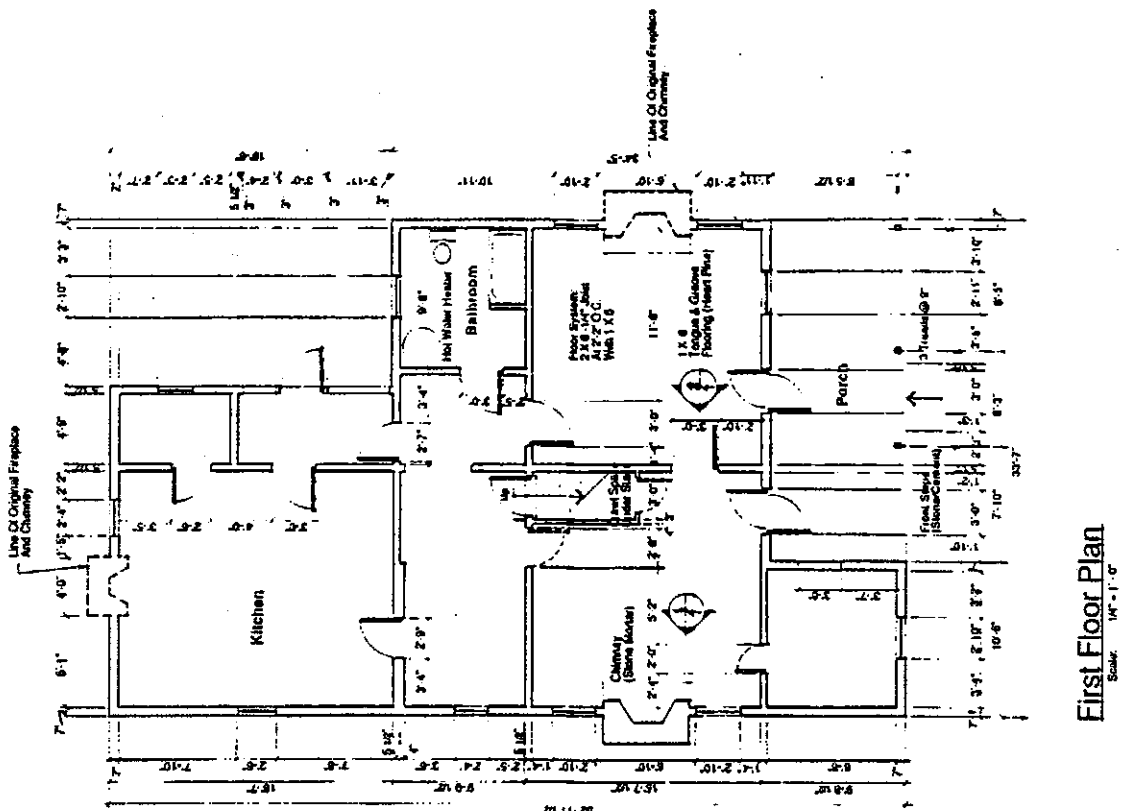
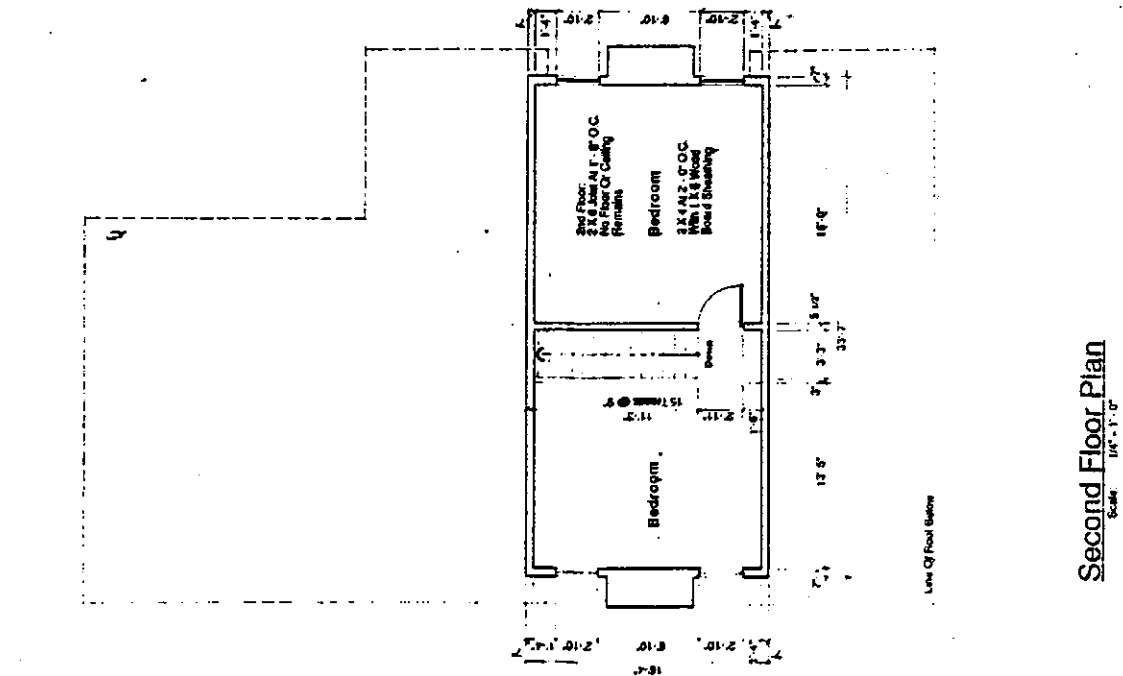
THE DOCUMENTATION OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCES WITHIN THE BENJAMIN HOLMES FARM PROJECT AREA WAS UNDERTAKEN BY ERASCO SERVICES, INC. AND THE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM. THE PROJECT WAS A JOINT EFFORT WITH THE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM. THE PROJECT DATA RECOVERY, RITA F. ELLIOTT, FIELD DIRECTOR FOR DALLAS, TEXAS, AND THE PROJECT HISTORIAN, DAVID J. JAGER, PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHER, ALMA ANAPREYCHICK, PROJECT ARCHITECT, AND W. A. ANDREWS, PROJECT ARCHITECT.

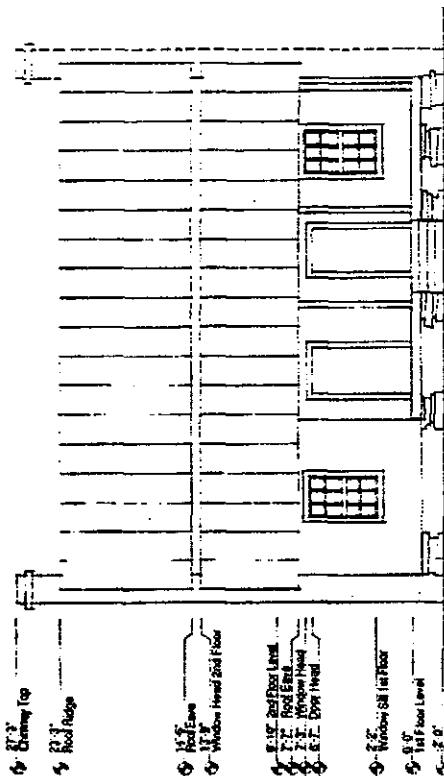


Benjamin Holmes Farm
1458 Dogwood Road
Snellville, Georgia

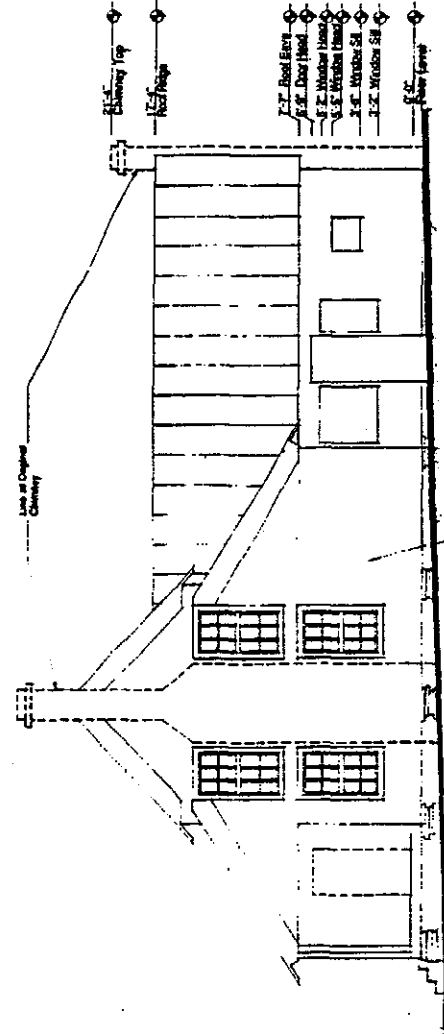
Location Map
Scale: 1" = 2000'



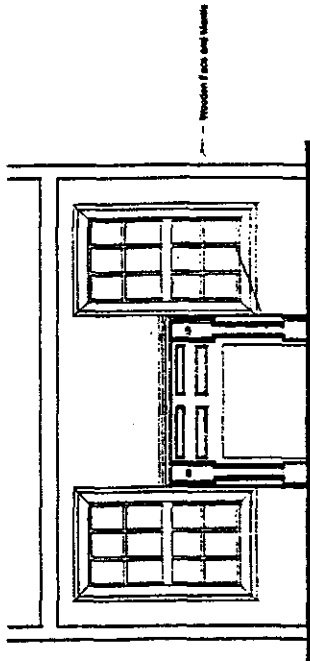




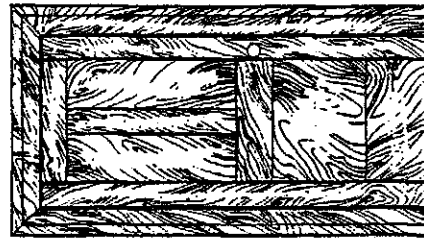
Front Elevation
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



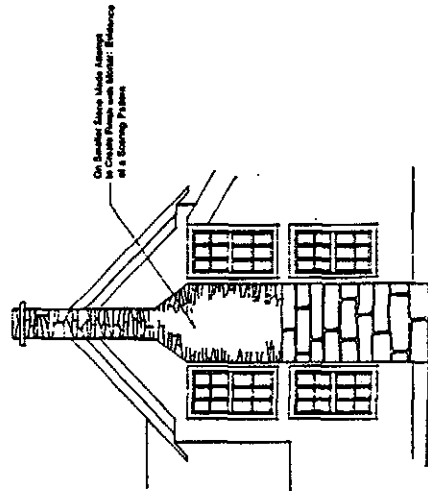
Right Side Elevation
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



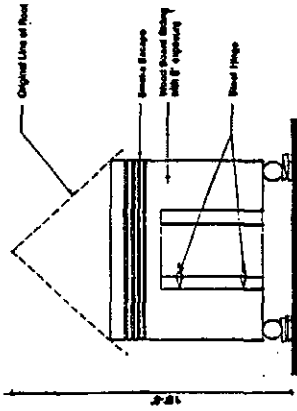
1 Interior Elevation
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



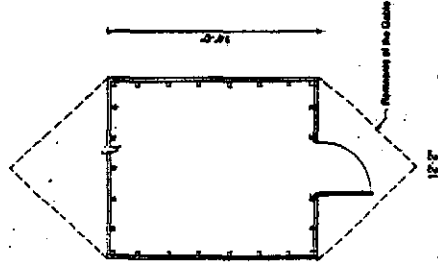
2 Elevation of Interior Door
Scale: 1" = 1'-0"



3 Elevation of Chimney
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 Front Elevation - Smoke House
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 Floor Plan - Smoke House
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"